12 October 1970

TO   : Jack

FROM   : Ed

SUBJECT: COINS and the DDI

     1. We have two entities involved in COINS--NPIC and CRS. NPIC has the Blip File of imagery-derived information which was available to COINS for a short while until it was realized that COINS could not handle TKH information. CRS has constructed three special files for COINS; these have not been used extensively by the Community. CRS is now in the process of giving COINS access to its AEGIS file of finished intelligence publications. (This might be the most useful file CIA has put into the system.)

     2. Our analysts have not found any use for the access COINS presumably gives them to data in the files of NSA and DIA.

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     3. [   ] has reached the conclusion that CIA has to take a more constructive role in COINS in order not to perpetuate the uncooperative reputation we have acquired. He sees two options-- give the job either to CRS or OCS. Logic would put the task in CRS because it is the Agency's major general information file-builder, but CRS does not now have the specially trained computer personnel required to run the system. OCS has the kind of personnel necessary.

     4. If CRS is given the job:

    -- it would have to acquire more skilled personnel.

    -- it would have to acquire an additional computer.

    -- it would have to undertake the construction of special files for COINS, with little if any use to CIA production components.

-- it would have to divert to COINS about 1,400 square feet of floor space in this building.

-- it would need extensive support from OCS.

-- preliminary cost estimates are as follows:

. one-time costs for systems study and site preparation over $100,000.

. annual operating costs of about $270,000 to $500,000 (depending on the computer) including the salaries of ten additional people in CRS.

5. After years of pressure, we have finally got CRS to focus on the needs of the Agency and to carry out only those Community activities with which it is charged (mainly, biographics). CRS has been turning down requests for file searches from the outside that involve significant expenditures of time. If CRS were to be given the COINS task, it would be a reversal of the policy direction we have taken. Most of the COINS product would be for outsiders with no substantive benefit to the Agency.

6. Should OCS or CRS get the COINS job? Many in CRS see COINS as a logical extension of its CIA responsibilities (and will increase the size and prestige of CRS in this field). Harry feels that doing a good job on COINS would increase CRS manpower and money and would increasingly divert CRS efforts from its Agency job to something having very little substantive benefits to the Agency. I recommend that OCS get the COINS job.

OFFICE OF DD/I

DATE: 12 October 1970

TO: Jack

FROM: Ed

SUBJECT:

Item for Deputies Meeting
14 October 1970 -- C O I N S

REMARKS:

Attached is a chronology on COINS to be used as background for the Deputies Meeting. [   ] will talk on the subject. The purpose of the meeting is to formulate the Agency's position on the matter.

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[   ] will probably make these points:

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- CIA has found no uses for COINS and would prefer that it go away. (See attached paragraphs from ASPIN Study.)

- CIA will have to participate.

- Rather than link a variety of computers in the Community, it would be better to set up one computer with remote terminals in various agencies. (But, such actions would be counter to the "experiment" and will be rejected.)

- CIA should have a separate computer to handle its participation in COINS in order to meet security standards and provide enough time.

- This dedicated computer might handle the problem.) (CRS is not in a position to

ACTION

ASPIN   Study Views on C O I N S

11.   COINS has been of almost no use to the
production analyst although it represents something
of an achievement in concert of community action on a
collective data processing experiment.   We believe
that the procedures used to support and perpetuate
COINS will seriously delay rather than hasten the
advent of an inter-agency system.   The emphasis on
the development of automated files and their process-
ing in a large-computer network as a goal in itself
is a highly questionable procedure.   But it is exceeded
by the notion that this process should continue until
it is successful.   Certain of the premises of COINS
with respect to the technical achievement of time-
sharing systems and of the identity and duplication
of intelligence community files appear to have been
seriously in error.   The COINS effort seems to have
generated a life of its own.   It has been an exceedingly
expensive effort for the Agency, and it promises to
become even more expensive should the Agency have to
dedicate an entire computer system to it as additional
evidence of good faith.

We recommend that the Agency seek to secure
an evaluation of the present COINS experiment at the
earliest possible moment in an effort to provide
clearer guidance for future Agency planning for partici-
pation in Intelligence Community ADP activities.